

David Zwirner
525 West 19th Street
New York, NY 10011
tel (212) 727 2070 fax (212) 727 2072
info@davidzwirner.com
www.davidzwirner.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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EXHIBITION:

ON KAWARA – Paintings of 40 Years

DATES:

September 9 – October 16, 2004

Opening Thursday, September 9, 2004 David Zwirner will present the work of On Kawara. *On Kawara – Paintings of 40 Years* will be the artist's third solo exhibition with David Zwirner and will feature a selection of *Date* paintings, one from each of the past forty years.

On Kawara is a prominent figure in contemporary art. His work has been included in many conceptual art surveys from the seminal *Information* show at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1970 to *Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975* at the Museum of Modern Art, Los Angeles in 1995. Solo exhibitions of his work have included the Centre Pompidou, Paris in 1977; *Continuity/ Discontinuity* at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm in 1980; Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam in 1991; and the Dia Center for the Arts, New York in 1993.

The artist's work is currently on view at DIA Beacon, and is part of an ongoing exhibition entitled *Consciousness. Meditation. Watcher on the Hills*, which is currently touring clockwise around the world. Originated by the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, U.K., this exhibition will next be shown at the A.A.R.A. in Bangkok from September 27 until October 22, 2004. Seven consecutive *Date* paintings (1 January 1997 - 7 January 1997) are displayed in kindergarten classrooms around the world as part of the ongoing project, *Pure Consciousness*. These paintings will next be shown in a school in Bhutan at the end of October 2004. On Kawara will be the subject of a solo exhibition at the Dallas Museum of Art in early 2006.

On Kawara, Paintings of 40 Years begins with the 1965 triptych: *Title (ONE THING, 1965, VIETNAM)*. With this painting, the artist placed the date 1965 at the center of the triptych—establishing the notion of time as a dominant theme. This painting is a precursor for the artist's *Today* series of *Date* paintings, in which the dates become the main element and the only text of the painting.

The artist started making *Date* paintings for the *Today* series on January 4, 1966 in New York City and has been making them in different parts of the world ever since. Each *Date* painting is completed by midnight on the day it is painted, otherwise it is destroyed. The date is always documented in the language and grammatical conventions of the country in which the painting is executed. The paintings conform to one of eight standard sizes, ranging from 8x10 inches to 61x89 inches. Each work is carefully executed by hand. The artist created a version of the sans serif typeface that he uses to meticulously paint the letters and numbers in white on a monochrome surface (background colors range from blue to black to brown to gray to red). Each *Date* painting has "Today series" as part of its title. The individual works are differentiated by the date depicted, and by the subtitle, which is derived from a headline or caption from a local newspaper of the city in which the painting is executed (more recently the subtitle refers to the day of the week). A newspaper clipping is used to line the interior of a cardboard box that encases the painting when not on display. Sometimes, however, there is no newspaper, and the painting and box stand alone.

Each *Date* painting is registered in a journal and marked on a *One Hundred Years Calendar*. One of these calendars, from 2003, is shown in the exhibition. The journal records the details of the painting's size, color and newspaper headline, while the calendar uses colored dots to indicate the days in which a painting was made, and to record the number of days since the artist's birth. The only official biographical details the artist provides at an exhibition are the number of days of his life up to the opening date of the show. In this case it is 26,192 days.

The *Today* series, though simple and direct, suggests a profound and important message. It not only addresses the passage of time, but the nature of pure consciousness. It is one of *the* main signatures of recent art history. The artist "regards the process of making the *Date* paintings as a form of meditation, a routine conducive to the loss of ego and distractions from fundamental truths equally if not more evident to our illiterate forebears. However, the vehicle for the meditation is not without distinguishing features or focus and these can be articulated. The date is about time, and surely and ultimately about human mortality."

The gallery has published an 80-page catalogue featuring color images with essays by Jean-Luc Nancy, Shiuji Inomata, and Osho.

For further information, please contact the gallery at 212.727.2070 or visit www.davidzwirner.com.